

# Sample Activity from 'More Activities That Teach'

## ADD A WORD

**TOPIC AREAS:** Diversity, Working Together

**CONCEPT:** When there is a problem to solve or a discussion about a topic, the more people that provide input the better the outcome. People bring a wide variety of experiences to any given situation. These experiences can help to see things in a different light or to provide a different viewpoint. If everyone works alone with only their own experiences to draw upon, then they have a very narrow reservoir of knowledge to draw upon. Even if they work with others who have had the same kinds of experiences and background that they have, the pool of knowledge is still somewhat limited.

**METHOD:** Classroom activity

**TIME NEEDED:** 15 minutes and discussion time

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

One piece of paper and a pen or pencil for each team of three

A watch with a second hand

**ACTIVITY:** Divide your group into teams of four. Give each team a piece of paper and a pencil or a pen. Explain that the object of this activity is for each team to create the longest sentence that they can. You will give them the first few words to the sentence. Each person will then take turns adding one word at a time to the sentence. The sentence must make sense and it must come to a logical ending. The paper and pencil must be passed from person to person as they add their word. They may not talk at all during this part of the activity. They will have sixty seconds to complete their sentence. Call out the time so they will know how long they still have to write.

After you have called time, have each group count up the number of words that they used including the words that you gave them to start with. Have them write this number to the side of their sentence. Have each group tell how many words

they used. Ask for volunteers to read their sentence aloud. Repeat this process three or four times. Here are some of the sentence starters that I have used.

The cow jumped...

A worm crawled...

A loud crash...

People who are...

The next time...

A woman screamed...

One dark night...

After you have completed three or four rounds, change the rules. This time the paper and pencil must still be passed from one person to another and each person may still only add one word at a time, but the group may talk among themselves to make suggestions on what the sentence will say. Once again only give them sixty seconds to create their sentence. Call out the elapsed time for them to hear. When time has ended, have them read their sentence aloud and tell how many words they used. Repeat this twice. You should notice an increase in the number of words that they were able to write when you compare the very first try where they couldn't talk with the very last try where they could talk.

## DISCUSSION IDEAS:

How well did your team do when you couldn't talk?

How easy was it to figure out which word to use next?

How much pressure did you feel when it was your turn? Explain.

How did the activity change for you when the group could talk?

Was your team able to create longer sentences when they could talk? Why or why not?

How much pressure did you feel when the group could make suggestions? Explain.

When you have a problem to solve how much help is it to have someone else give you suggestions?

Will a greater number of people always make it easier to solve a problem? Why or why not?

How can people with different backgrounds than yours help you solve a problem?

Why would it be important for people of different backgrounds to work together on problem solving?

What could someone from a different culture provide that you couldn't?

How do different viewpoints help solve problems?

Reprinted from <http://www.activelearning.org/sample-activity-moreatt.html>